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Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

Provisional

6362nd meeting

Tuesday, 20 July 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Lutterotti
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ms. Ćolaković
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Bonne
	Gabon	Mr. Onanga Ndiaye
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Lebanon	Ms. Ziade
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	Turkey	Mr. Müftüoğlu
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on Eritrea (S/2010/327)

Letter dated 12 July 2010 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2010/372)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on Eritrea (S/2010/327)

Letter dated 12 July 2010 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2010/372)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Djibouti, Eritrea and Somalia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Miss Kadra Ahmed Hassan (Djibouti), Mr. Desta (Eritrea) and Mr. Dhakkar (Somalia) took seats at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2010/327, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on Eritrea, and document S/2010/372, which contains a letter dated 12 July 2010 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I wish also to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2010/291, which contains a letter dated 7 June 2010 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, and document S/2010/350, which contains a letter dated 30 June 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing a by Mr. Lynn Pascoe, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. Pascoe: I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to present to the Security Council the Secretary-General's report (S/2010/327) on Eritrea's compliance with the provisions of resolution 1907 (2009) of 23 December 2009.

Members will recall that in that resolution the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to report within 180 days on Eritrea's compliance with the provisions of the resolution relating to the border dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea. The other aspects of the resolution, relating to Somalia, will be best addressed by the newly established Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea. May I note at the outset that in preparing this statement and the report before the Council, we have consulted with the representatives of Djibouti, Eritrea and Qatar.

As members are aware, the dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea erupted in March 2008 following Eritrea's deployment of troops and military equipment in Ras Doumeira and Doumeira Island, two localities adjoining the de facto Djibouti-Eritrea border. Despite conflicting colonial agreements on the precise position of the borderline, Ras Doumeira and Doumeira Island were administered by Djibouti up until the eruption of hostilities between the two countries.

The most recent development during this period is the agreement signed by Eritrea and Djibouti on 6 June 2010, under the auspices of the State of Qatar. In the agreement, the two States decided to resolve, through a negotiated settlement, their border conflict. The agreement mandates the State of Qatar to establish

a mechanism that would facilitate the demarcation, by an international company, of the common border between Djibouti and Eritrea. The agreement further provides for the State of Qatar to monitor the border and address the question of prisoners of war and missing persons.

In a letter dated 9 July addressed to the Secretary-General, the Prime Minister of the State of Qatar informed us that Eritrean troops have withdrawn from the areas of Ras Doumeira and Doumeira Island, and the State of Qatar has deployed military observers pending a final settlement, which both parties agreed would be final and binding. The letter further stated that the withdrawal of the two forces from the border and border areas was completed on 5 June 2010. The Government of the State of Qatar deployed a company unit in the State of Eritrea as of 31 May 2010 and a platoon-size unit in the Republic of Djibouti as of 4 June 2010. The Government of Qatar has confirmed to us that cooperation between both countries and the Qatari forces is good, and the Qatari forces will remain deployed in both countries until the dispute between them has been settled.

The Secretary-General has remained engaged on this issue and offered the services of the United Nations should the parties and the State of Qatar need them. On 24 June 2010, the Secretary-General received a letter from President Isaias Afwerki which reiterated the Government of Eritrea's positions on issues of peace and security in the Horn of Africa region, including on Security Council resolution 1907 (2009).

The letter stated that lack of a final resolution on the Eritrea-Ethiopia border dispute remains the underlying source of instability in the region. It makes reference to the ruling of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission in 2002 and the lack of progress in its implementation. It further stated that the State of Qatar was engaged in an initiative to resolve any misunderstandings between Djibouti and Eritrea.

In his reply to President Afwerki's letter, the Secretary-General reaffirmed his commitment to dialoguing with him and his government on the regional challenges raised in his letter. He also reiterated his belief that durable peace and stability in the region require the constructive engagement of all regional stakeholders, including Eritrea. He also stated that a comprehensive approach needs to be taken to effectively address the conflicts in the Horn of Africa, including through the settlement of the border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

In conclusion, first, we commend the recent concrete steps taken by Eritrea and Djibouti on the border issue, with the active mediation efforts of the State of Qatar. The Secretary-General has offered the technical support of the United Nations, should it be requested.

Secondly, it is our belief that the States in the Horn of Africa region, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Africa Union and the United Nations must work together to effectively address the interlinked conflicts in the region, including in Somalia, and the long-standing border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Lastly, with the recent appointment of the members of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea on 1 July, we urge all States and other parties involved to facilitate their work. We look forward to the Monitoring Group's independent reporting on Eritrea's compliance with the provisions of relevant resolutions.

The President: I thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Eritrea.

Mr. Desta (Eritrea): I wish to congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July, and I wish to thank you and the members of the Council for according my delegation the opportunity to share its views on the agenda item "Peace and security in Africa".

Before I address its substance, let me take this opportunity also to welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/327) and its reflection of most of the important developments in our region and some of the concerns of my country. Since Eritrea has already submitted its views on the contents of the report of the Secretary-General, I will limit my intervention to three specific issues: Eritrea-Ethiopia, Djibouti-Eritrea, and Somalia. Each issue is distinct from the others, yet they are all linked by history and geography. It goes without saying that such ties go far beyond the countries mentioned.

The pacific settlement of disputes among nations is one of the core principles on which the United Nations was founded. In this connection, I wish to commend the Secretary-General for pointing out the need to resolve the Eritrea-Ethiopia border dispute, which was peacefully, legally and technically concluded by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission. However, the non-implementation of the Commission's rulings continues to impede collective and common approaches to some of the serious problems of the region, not to mention the huge sacrifices it demands of the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The Eritrea-Ethiopia issue is indeed centred on the occupation of sovereign Eritrean territories by Ethiopia, and it must be dealt with in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and other relevant provisions of international law. This violation needs the urgent attention of the Council and should not be treated differently than others of a similar nature. Let me state frankly that, for the past eight years, the Security Council has declined to address Ethiopia's defiance of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission's final and binding delimitation award of 13 April 2002 and the demarcation decision of November 2007.

Ethiopia's refusal to honour its obligation and its act of arming, training, hosting and financing Eritrean armed elements with the objective of destabilizing Eritrea should not be allowed to continue without a reaction and action on the part of the Security Council. Issues of peace and security must be addressed in a fair and objective way, as the United Nations Charter dictates. The Eritrea-Ethiopia issue was on the agenda of the Security Council for many years, from 1998 until the Council decided to end the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea by resolution 1827 (2008) of 30 July 2008.

Recalling that, under paragraph 6 of that resolution, the Council decided to remain actively seized of the matter, I wish to once again urge the Security Council to discharge its responsibility in a manner consistent with its mandate under the United Nations Charter in order to ensure Ethiopia's withdrawal of its troops from sovereign Eritrean territories.

Somalia continues to be the most difficult crisis to resolve in the African region, and that may continue to be the case until the Somalis are allowed to rise to the challenge of the day, which requires determination and a shared vision of a united and stable Somalia. For this to materialize, greater emphasis should be placed on opening a political space that would allow all Somali key actors to engage in meaningful and peaceful discussions. Eritrea will continue to work with the international community in seeking a sustainable peace in Somalia. It was in this spirit that Eritrea participated in the Istanbul Conference on Somalia by accepting the gracious invitation extended to it by the Government of Turkey and the United Nations in order to end the suffering of the Somalis.

Eritrea believes that the efforts of the international community should be guided by certain principles. First, there can be no military solution to the conflict in Somalia. Secondly, the only real prospect for a lasting resolution of the Somali problem lies in an inclusive political process. Thirdly, a lasting solution for Somalia can only be the outcome of a Somali-owned and Somali-driven process. As demonstrated during the Istanbul Conference, Eritrea shall engage officials of the Transitional Federal Government and other key actors. Eritrea shall remain part of a sustained and constructive effort to achieve peace and stability in Somalia.

On Djibouti, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General, the agreement signed by the Governments of Eritrea and Djibouti under the leadership of the Emir of Qatar, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, was a significant development. Ever since the issue of Djibouti-Eritrea was brought to the attention of the Security Council, Eritrea has exercised restraint and opted for the matter to be addressed in a calm and quiet manner, preferably at the bilateral level or through a third party acceptable to both sides, taking into account the sisterly relationship of the two countries and the need to ensure peace and security in the subregion. In this context, Eritrea is pleased by the Qatari mediation to restore and cultivate good-neighbourly relations with Djibouti on the basis of full respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Finally, notwithstanding resolution 1907 (2009), which was imposed on Eritrea unjustly and selectively by lumping unrelated issues together, my delegation remains committed to regional peace and security. Eritrea takes issues of peace and security very seriously and it will not be discouraged or deterred

from participating in meaningful and fruitful discussions that contribute concretely to sustainable peace in its region.

In light of the steps taken by Eritrea, together with Djibouti, under the auspices of Qatar's diplomatic efforts, and of Eritrea's firm commitment to peace efforts in Somalia, my delegation appeals to the Security Council to lift the sanctions regime imposed on Eritrea.

Let me also express my country's deep grief over the recent bombing in Kampala, Uganda, which claimed several innocent lives, including those of six Eritreans, and many wounded.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Djibouti.

Miss Hassan (Djibouti) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to offer my delegation's congratulations to your country on its outstanding leadership in the presidency of the Security Council. I also take this opportunity to thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing, as well as the members of the Security Council who have given my delegation the opportunity to take part in this discussion on peace and security in Africa.

The facts described in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/327) show that the efforts of Council members and the measures they have taken, in particular through the adoption of resolutions 1862 (2009) in January 2009 and 1907 (2009) in December 2009, have contributed very clearly to the changes that have taken place on the ground within only a few months. My Government is convinced that, without the resolve of Council members, it is not certain that the report before the Council would have had the same tenor. In fact, since 2008 — when Eritrea launched a surprise war against my country — Council members have borne witness to the unfolding of events and will recall Eritrea's ongoing denial of the very existence of the conflict.

It is undeniable that the adoption of resolution 1907 (2009) was decisive to the protracted process that has led to the situation under discussion here today. My Government welcomes the fact that its repeated appeals to Council members have finally been heeded.

My Government welcomes the developments on the ground described in the report and would like to reach a final and lasting solution to the border dispute generated by Eritrea two years ago. My Government also appreciates and welcomes the mediation of the authorities of Qatar and is ready to work closely with them to peacefully resolve the dispute with Eritrea.

My Government has faith in the leadership of the brotherly country of Qatar and is convinced that it will lead us to a good solution. While the beginnings are encouraging, the road before us is long and will require a tireless and serious commitment on the part of us all in the months to come, because the matters to be discussed are sensitive. As noted by Mr. Pascoe, these issues include prisoners of war, missing persons and border demarcation and delimitation.

Before concluding, I welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General, who has spared no effort and has always offered his good offices. We hope that future developments will allow his next report to have the same positive tone. My country, as always, is ready to work for peace in the region and in the world.

I would like to conclude by extending the most sincere condolences of my Government to the sister Republic of Uganda for the attacks that took place on its soil by Somali extremists.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.35 a.m.